

Proclamation 6687—Older Americans Month, 1994

May 9, 1994

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Each year over 2 million of us become older Americans—entering a time of life that can bring new freedom, new choices, and new beginnings. Retirement years offer the freedom to strengthen family bonds and to share knowledge and talents with friends and family members. It can be a time to engage in cultural, intellectual, and recreational activities with others and to provide them with the guidance that comes from a lifetime of experience. It can be a time of new beginnings—used to pursue a second career, to gain more education, or to engage in volunteer work that makes our neighborhoods, communities, and the world a better place in which to live.

To enjoy these opportunities, we must take greater responsibility in planning for a long life. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle and staying physically fit can help us to make the most of these new freedoms, choices, and beginnings. While we in Government work to promote universal health care coverage for all Americans, all of us can encourage friends and families to pursue daily practices that promote physical and mental well-being.

This year's Older Americans Month celebration centers around the theme of long life and good health with the slogan—"Aging: An Experience of a Lifetime." I am asking all Americans to help make this theme a reality by striving to achieve healthy and productive lifestyles.

Each year, we are learning new ways to promote longer, healthier, and more rewarding lives. We can do this by learning to eat nutritiously, by giving up smoking, by moderating our consumption of alcoholic beverages, and by entering into a personal or group fitness program. New studies show that regardless of age, it's never too late to improve health and vitality.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by

the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim the month of May 1994, as Older Americans Month. I call upon individual Americans, representatives of government at all levels, businesses, and community, volunteer, and educational groups to work to increase opportunities for older Americans and to adopt healthier lifestyles.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighteenth.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 11.

Remarks in a Town Meeting in Cranston, Rhode Island

May 9, 1994

The President. Thank you very much. First, thank you, Doug and Ginger, and thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for coming. And I want to thank the people in New Haven and Springfield.

We only have an hour tonight; we're not going to have any breaks. So I'm going to give a very brief opening statement about the problems presented by our health care system in America today and briefly what we propose to do about it.

There is a crisis in health care. During any given time in the year there will be a total of 58 million Americans without any health insurance. There are 81 million Americans—out of a population of 255 million—in families with preexisting conditions, that is, someone in the family has been ill, which means they either don't have insurance, they pay much more for their insurance, or they can never change their jobs because they would lose their insurance if they changed jobs. It's a huge problem.

One hundred and thirty-three million Americans, or three out of four Americans with private health insurance, have insurance policies with lifetime limits, which means